I Shall Never Return
5
Kazuna Uchida
Deux
EXPLICIT CONTENT

I Shall Never Return 5

Kazuna Uchida

Final act 2
Young, alive, & in love 181

Final act

LET'S BE HAPPY.

I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN GET
THROUGH ANYTHING NOW.

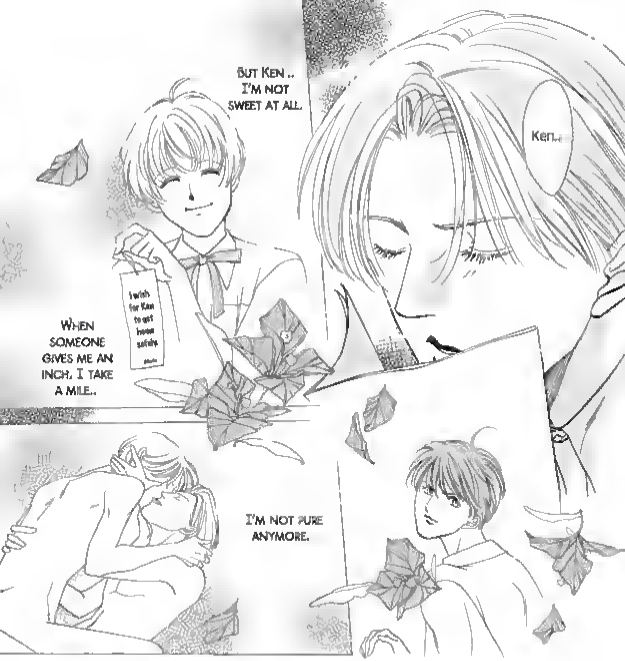
WE CAN GET THROUGH ANY HARDSHIP.

WE CAN HAVE THOSE
ORDINARY DAYS WE ALWAYS WANTED.

LET'S BE HAPPY, KEN.

I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY HEART

DEAR RITSURO
KEN
things I could never see before
even your sweetness, that I ne
now I understand it, Ritsuro.
I Miss you
P.S. I'm enclosing some bo
Ritsuro,
Even your sweetness that I never realized before
I can see all these things I could never see before
I miss you too
I miss you


BUT KEN.. I'M NOT SWEET AT ALL.
Ken..
I wish for Ken to get house safely.
WHEN SOMEONE GIVES ME AN INCH, I TAKE A MILE..
I'M NOT PURE ANYMORE.

We're finally at the last volume of *I Shall Never Return*. I'm going to use the space to talk about the characters. Let's start with our hero, Ritsuro Yoshinari. He was born on July 7- the festival of Tanabata, and he's a Cancer. His blood type was originally O but I don't think it fits. He seems more like a Type A. But anyway, the one thing I remember most about Ritsuro is that he was always wearing the same clothes. Ha ha! He wasn't really into fashion, but he always looked neat and clean. Somehow that really limited me in the clothes I could give him. If I tried to draw him in something a little different, like something with a pattern, it didn't look right at all. But a lot of people seemed to be able to relate to Ritsuro's reserved character. I hope he was able to keep his place as the hero till the very end.

TAKEN OVER BY THE LUST I BELIEVED TO BE SO DIRTY, I ALMOST LOST SIGHT OF ALL THOSE MOMENTS.
THE MOMENT I REALIZED THAT DESIRE WAS A PART OF LOVE
THE MOMENT I FELT THAT DESIRE MYSELF
I THOUGHT PLEASURE WAS LOVE TOO, BUT I WAS *WRONG*
THE MOMENT I FELT THROUGHOUT MY WHOLE BODY *ALL* OF THOSE MOMENTS ..
Ken.

Can the same be said of *me*?
I told you once...
.. that you were too hard on yourself That you'd just had a moment of weakness.
THEN WE COULD START OVER.
THIS TIME, IT'S *MY* TURN TO CHANGE.
WITH *YOU* AS MY ANCHOR, CHASING YOUR DREAMS IN INDIA.
JUST YOU WAIT..
By the time you come home I'll be a changed man.

ENGLISH

Thanks for dinner.
Sorry. I gotta go
Studying?
Yeah.
BZZZZ
BZZZZ
BZZZZ
There's this section I want to finish tonight
Ritsuro's working hard I'm glad
I'm relieved. he seems to have given up on the idea of going to school in Tokyo.
You think so?

You mean Ken?
It would have given him a chance to cut ties with unsuitable acquaintances.
I don't know why he wanted to go to Tokyo...
but I think it might have been *better* for him
Dad, dropping out doesn't make him a terrible person.
That kid's a drifter and a dropout
Ritsuro needs to cut him loose before he gets dragged down *with* him
You two...
That's true Ken *did* have his reasons And I hear his mother is happily remarried now...
Some kids just figure out what they want to do with their lives before most...
...and some have reasons that they need to start working.

It's Ritsuro we're talking about You can trust him
I don't know much about boys' friendships, but
Ken really relies on Ritsuro and vice versa.
CLATTER
Nami...
Thanks for dinner
CLATTER
...
DRIP
DRIP
CRUSH CRUSH

ings
FSHHHH
FSHHHH
SPLASH
SPLASH
twirl
Ritsuro!
twirl
What a coincidence!
LOFT

Moeko..
On your way home from your school?
You work so hard!
What about you?
I had to buy something for Michiru her birthday's coming up
I needed to find a present.
You guys are so close
Yeah.
But we're not going to college together
Michiru wants to work in fashion, and I—
Oh yeah. what do you want to do?
I'm not sure yet.
What about you?
I'm...

What?
Well, I...
I really like books so I think I want to try writing
Huh?
I'M
CLINK
CLINK
CLINK
カラ～ン
CLINK
Moeko?
I guess that's *my* dream.

Even if it doesn't end up happening, I think it's important to try. I'll work on my writing in college.
writer?
Hohoh...n DAZE
I wasn't making fun of you! I was just...
I'm just saying!
Excuuuse me!
I was just thinking...
Maybe I want to be a translator.
Yeah...

Good idea!
And Ken's photobooks, too.
DREAMS.
Then you can translate my novels for foreign publishers!
A GIGGLE
EVEN AS WE FOLLOWED OUR DREAMS.
IT'D BE WONDERFUL IF WE WERE TOGETHER EVEN THEN.
Oh it stopped raining!
Shall we?
WITHOUT HOLDING EACH OTHER BACK.
WITHOUT LEAVING EACH OTHER BEHIND.
IT'D BE WONDERFUL IF WE COULD WALK TOGETHER TOWARD OUR DREAMS.

I totally had the wrong idea!
Moeko...
I was thinking ...you might have moved on to Iwasaki
Huh?
I'm sorry, Ritsuro
I love Ken
Moeko I—
Now you're getting all mushy

I LOVE KEN.
I LOVE HIM
I LOVE HIM
Mail?
No, there wasn't anything for you today.
KEN
No news is good news, right?

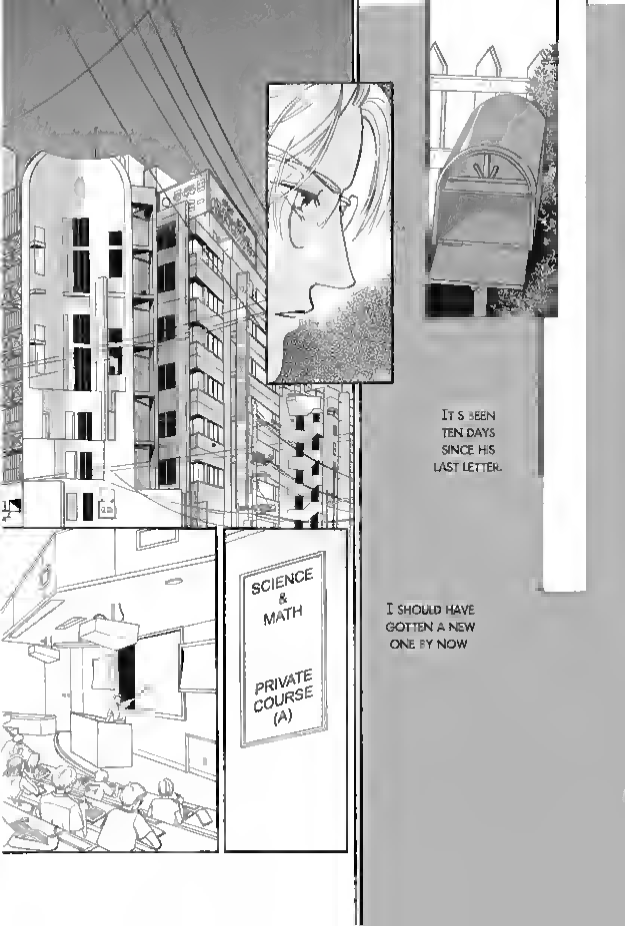
LIBRARY
Excuse me. I'd like to check these out.
Love huh?

Hmmm!
BUZZ
BUZZ
but I'm glad for them
I can't compete with *that*
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ
BUZZ

Thank you
BOW
Y-Yeah
Hello. Hot today, isn't it?
For what, sir?
You saved me, Kobashi.
Thanks to you, I was able to go back to the way things were. To... ...being just a teacher and a student.

I-
D-Don't!
Thank you!
I-
I don't hate you Mr. Yumioka.
Kobashi..
And it made me happy when you said you liked me.

I could never hate you
G-Good-bye..
Kohashi...
Thank you, Kobashi!


IT'S BEEN TEN DAYS SINCE HIS LAST LETTER.
I SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN A NEW ONE BY NOW
SCIENCE & MATH
PRIVATE COURSE (A)

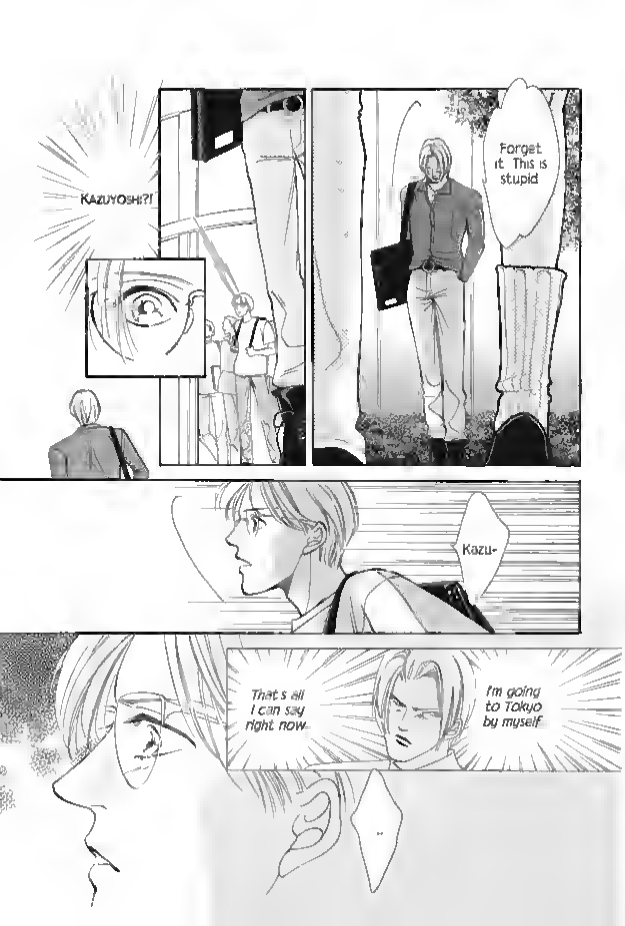
Hey, if it isn't Kazuyoshi!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
Kazuyoshi!
I heard the rumors, but that's just *sad*, Kazuyoshi.
Don't tell me you've turned into a *preppie*
Hey, don't walk away!

So what Kozuki said was true
...
I don't have time to deal with you losers!
You really double-crossed them.
Everyone's sayin' you sold Masatake out to the cops.
VROOM
You gotta be *kidding* me!
That was his brother *Katsunori*!
Well, I dunno. But you better watch your *back*
Kozuki and his guys are lookin' for you.
We warned you, OK?
Don't get pissed at *us*!

Hey!
it wasn't my fault.
GASP
Loft

They're not gonna go after Ritsuro, are they?
Even those bastards wouldn't do *that* Ritsuro's got nothing to do with this. They couldn't.
Ritsuro? He's in class until ten...
Yes, at the Umeda Seminar...
SEMINAR

CHATTER
CHATTER
What the hell am I doing?


KAZUYOSHI?!
Forget it. This is stupid
Kazu-
That's all I can say right now.
I'm going to Tokyo by myself.
..

I didn't imagine that it was Kazuyoshi
How did he know where my class is?
And why
BEEP
BEEP
Hey, idiot! Pay attention!
S-sorry!
Huh?!
Oh, man so sorry!
Kozuki?
Kozuki? This guy's one o' yours?
Something like that! Sorry he's a total space cadet.
BEEP

VROOM
I gotta run
Gimme a call
all night?
Sure
thing.
Uh...
I'm a
friend of
Kazuyoshi's.
Kazuyoshi
Iwasaki
You know
him, right?
Y-Yes...
Right,
right.
And
you're...
Yoshinari,
correct?
Kazuyoshi
gave me
a message.
Said to
bring you
with me.
A FRIEND OF
KAZUYOSHI'S?

KAZUYOSHI WANTS TO SEE ME?
Mr. Kozuki!
Your car is ready
Right. Thanks.
Uh.. um..
C'mon, get in We're not going far
BUT I SAW HIM WAITING EARLIER...
SLAM
Let's go
SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT...

Yeah? What's up?
Hey you asleep or something?
Kozuki?!
You've changed, man. doing all this stuff you never used to do.
I heard you've been workin' hard. Why don't you take a break and come on over? Your friend's here.
My friend...? No!

Where are you?! Where?!
He wants you
Just gave him a little herbal refreshment Don't worry he's doing fine heh heh
What'd you do to Ritsuro?!
Man, is he an idiot
TAP
SLAM
TAXI

Ritsuro!
Where's Ritsuro?!
You didn't do anything to him, did you?!
Sleepin' like a baby.
Just a little pot, and he's out like a light.

CHAK
This kid...
TWITCH
Do anything?
BULP
I get it.
And here I didn't get why you were friends. Well, now..
He's Ritsuro Yoshinari, huh? Good to know
So this kid is the famous-
Ritsuro's got nothing to do with it! I'm the one you want!
Yeah, well

Masatake deserved to get caught!
Bastards! You're all scum!
And who's the one that bought the drugs, huh?
You and Ken got some good shit from us, and this is how you thank us?
I was treated like a suspect, you know.
That's your fault.
Payback time boys!

FWOOSH
PUNCH
SMACK
KICK
Ritsu!
Ritsuro!
Don't touch Ritsuro!

KAZU...YOSHI?
?!
Shhh I ain't gonna hurt you
Wha-?
Just pretend I'm *Ken*.
I know how things were with you and Ken.
THIS GUY... IS HE THE ONE...?
SHIFT
Mmm

Here...
FLINCH
The whole time I did him he just kept saying your name.
"Ritsuro..."
No! I... I CAN'T MOVE...
You've done this before..
No!
You bastard! I'll kill you!

No!
I'll kill you!
I'll fucking kill you!
WHOO
WHOO
WHOO
WHOO
WHOO
WHOO
WHOO

WHOO
WHOO
WHOO
WHOO
What's going on here?!
WHOO
WHOO
Hey! You there!
Hands in the air!
WHOO
Hey. I know you! You're that drug dealer we arrested!
Ritsuro!

Damn them!
Kazu...
DRIP
DRIP
Kazuyoshi... It's OK...
I'm OK...
THIS WAS THE WORLD KEN LIVED IN.
APARTMENT
DRUGS, SEX, VIOLENCE... IT'S NOT JUST A WORLD FOR ADULTS...

THIS WAS KEN'S WORLD, TOO...
If Iwasaki hadn't asked the cab driver to get help, who *knows* what would've happened...
CLICK
REALITY
So, do your folks know?
That you and Ken are fucking?
INTERROGATION ROOM A
SLAM

What?!
...um
EVEN IF REALITY IS CLOSING IN ON US...
H-He was talking to me...
No he wasn't Kazuyoshi!
I'm in love...
...with Ken.
...I WON'T RUN AWAY FROM IT.

SLAP
You filthy
TAP
I WON'T STOP SEEING HIM NO MATTER *WHAT* THEY SAY.

Is Ritsuro home?
RING
RING
I'm sorry to call so late. This is Ken Amafuji's mother
RING
RING
RING
I'm leaving for India so could you please give him a message?
Huh?
Ken and my husband are—
5/1-10/1

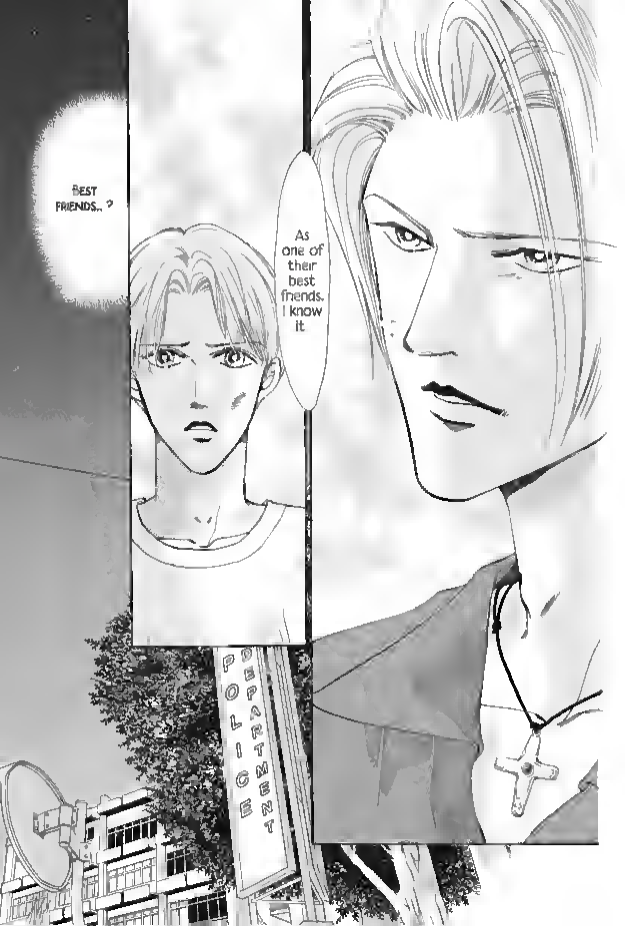
I CAN'T STOP HOW I FEEL
Oh...
Mitsui...
I'm in love with Ken.
I love him.

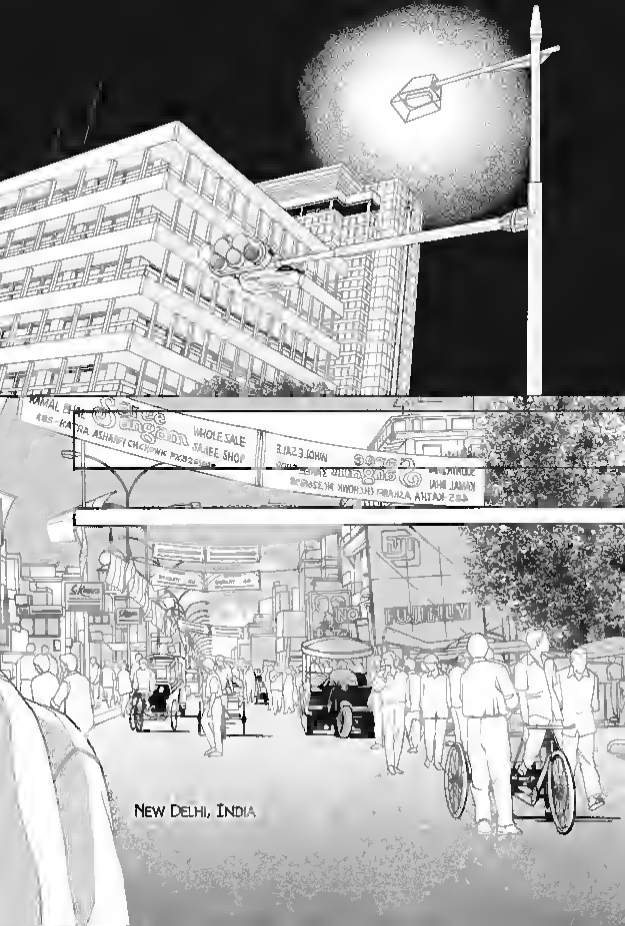
The next character I want to talk about is Kazuyoshi Iwasaki. His character changed the most over the course of the series. I guess he's a loser or something, he keeps getting rejected by the guys in this story. The thing that I remember most when I think of Kazuyoshi is his watch, which was my own little secret metaphor. There's the idea that says the way you treat your watch reflects the way you treat your lover. So I decided to make Kazuyoshi's watch reflect his mental state. He always wears the same watch and never takes it off. This represents his deep commitment to one person. When he first appeared, he was the villain, but even that was an aspect of his devotion to one particular person (Ken, at the time). I never talked about that in the story, so it was just something for myself. By the way, Kazuyoshi's birthday is November 30, and he's a Scorpio. Type O.

I love him because he's Ken!
Because he's *Ken!*
How can you know that?
I don't care if he's a guy!
You little—
Dear, stop!
Your son has just been involved in a serious incident! He's injured!
Here now, Mr. Yoshinari! Please stop this!
Who are *you?*

I should have introduced myself earlier. I'm Iwasaki Kazuyoshi's father!
My son owes a *lot* to Ritsuro
President?
President...
There's no logic to *love* You think *talking's* gonna help?
Kazu-yoshi...
Kazu
Dad, are you a complete *moron*?
Please try to talk this out, as a family
Mr. Iwasaki

I know Ken *and* Ritsuro.
They're so close it drives you insane.
They love each othur...
...*way* more than any couple I've ever seen.
KAZUYOSHI...


BEST FRIENDS..?
As one of their best friends, I know it
POLICE DEPARTMENT



New Delhi, India

Ms. Tsuzuki, over here!
As I told you over the phone, there was an automobile accident on the roadside along the riverbank. One of the cars flipped and was demolished
I'm J's friend, Shiva. This gentleman is a police officer.
We're currently investigating your husband's whereabouts. We received information that he was traveling toward Chandigarh, and we've begun our search there.
There was no identification in the car, so we can't be certain but we did find these letters .. written in Japanese.
Here.
My husband... and Ken?!

We haven't recovered any bodies. They could be alive somewhere. They could also be badly injured and in need of help
That's Ken's... handwriting!
Dear Rizwan,
Did you get my message?
I'm going to Chandigarh
I might be able to find out something.
I can't just stay here and do *nothing*.

CLICK
CLICK
TAP

CLICK
Ji
How're you doing?

Looks like vegetable soup for dinner
Ji Ken!
Seems to be patching itself up
I'm glad.
I'm sure it's this environment that healed me.
This is the second time I've come to this village. They always treat me like *royalty*
And we managed to save the camera and film even though the car was totaled
Heh. And then we walked for an entire week.
It was a miracle that we both came out of an accident like that with only minor injuries.

Besides, I wanted to bring you *here*
It would've been the same if we'd gone back to New Delhi
'Tis only a flesh wound!
I'm sorry I shouldn't have pushed you so much when you were hurt.
Thank you—
DEAR RITSURO,
WE WENT NORTH AFTER CHANDIGARH, AND NOW I'M IN A VILLAGE AT THE FOOT OF THE HIMALAYAS.

I DOUBT I'LL BE ABLE TO SEND THIS LETTER, BUT...
...I WANTED TO GET THESE FEELINGS DOWN ON PAPER.
Ken!

CLICK
J lemme see!
OK
So
J?

You're quite pale. We can take a break.
Mrs. Tsuzuki, are you all right? Was it the drive?
No...
Ugh...
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
Mrs. Tsuzuki..?!
!

J?!
CLATTER
ガラン
ガラン!
CLATTER
Ken!
J?!
What is it?!
My eyes...
Huh?

Your... eyes?
N-No.. I just suddenly felt dizzy
You should lie down.
Yeah OK
We should go back to New Delhi. .or at least to Chandigarh!
It must be because of the accident...
It's just a little altitude sickness.
How are *you* feeling? How's your stomach?
Oh, I'm fine. Nothing some herbs can't fix.

You're finally feeling what it's like to be really *in love* with something.
You're learning about the real-life drama of the people you see through the viewfinder
I'm fine
Let's stay a while longer We've got some film left and tomorrow we can climb a little higher and-
Don't be ridiculous.
You can't miss out on *that*
J...

K-CHAK
Nami— is it true that Ken's missing?
Yeah. His mom called last night to say she was on her way to India.

Don't say anything
Nami.
Oh, Ritsuro's home!
But...
How will that help Ritsuro now? This is an important time for him. You'll just make him worry.
R-Ritsu, honey. You're home late. Did you eat?

I'M NOT RUNNING AWAY.
THIS IS A SILENT WAR
Wh-What is it? Why are you all acting weird?
I WON'T LET ANYONE DENY US.
THIS IS A FIGHT TO PROVE MY LOVE TO THEM.
RITSURO...
SQUEEZE
Ken...

SCREECH
Ken?
I WANT TO SHOW YOU HOW WIDE THIS SKY IS.
I WANT TO SHOW YOU THE IMMENSITY OF ALL I SEE.

COUGH
COUGH
Huh?
Me? Pregnant?!

Mrs. Tsuzuki!
GASP
Pregnant with Junta's child?
I've been looking for you! A woman shouldn't go wandering alone like that.
Oh.
We have information that a Japanese man matching J's description was here!
He was seen in town with a young man not three days ago. He went on foot toward the Himalayas
They're finishing their journey. And I have an idea where they might be. There's a village not far from here that J's visited before.
Let's go now! We should be able to get there before nightfall!

What?
Why am I crying?
Those tears are purifying you, *inside*
You're completely clean now
J?

Ken.
A pure clean heart...
...knows how to break even the hardest shell from the inside out
Like a chick breaking out of its egg
We have to learn how to live as we go along. You know that already
I...

CLICK
CLICK
CLICK
Watch out, Ken. You'll fall if you're not careful
I know—but how can I *not* look at this view?

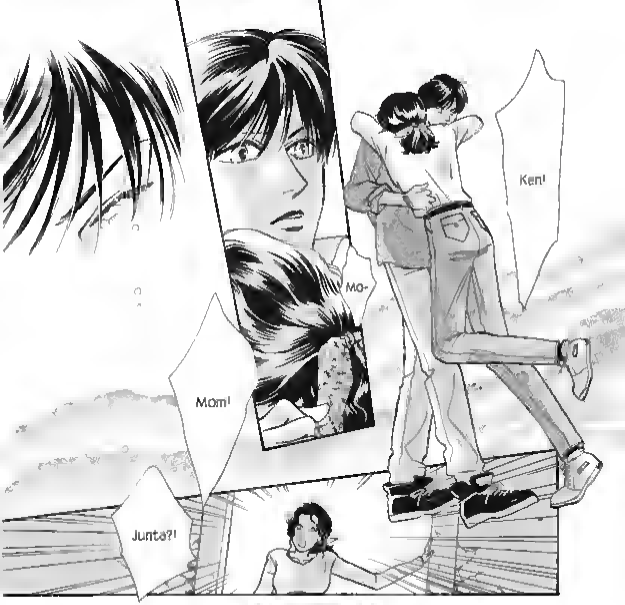
I just slipped a little
J?! What is it?!
Are you dizzy again?!
But...
J?
J, let's go back to the village. C'mon.
Sorry, Ken...

Ken!
Ken?
is that for J?

What are you talking about, J? There's a huge fire...
It's pitch black. Night fell quickly today
Huh?
Is everyone asleep?
Fire?
J- You can't...? Are you...?

THROB
!
Ken where *are* you?
Can't you see me?!
No way.
Gah
J!
J....
J, hang on!

VROOM
RATTLE
RATTLE
Someone, call a doctor!
BAM
Mom.


Ken!
Mo-
Mom!
Junta?!

Junta!
Shoko?
Why are you ?

INDIA MEDICAL UNIVERSITY
HOSPITAL NEW DELHI
Will he need surgery?
He must have hit his head very hard. There was hemorrhaging in his brain.
Now the blood clot is placing pressure on the optic nerve.

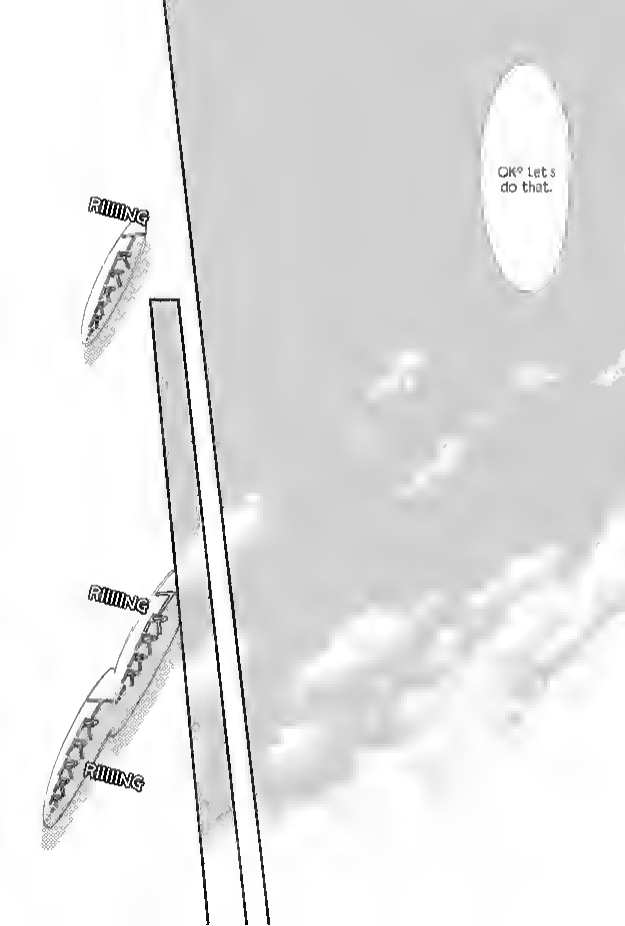
He may be *permanently* blind
Mom!
No! He's a photographer he depends on his sight!
It can't be! Jun...
ANN
Huh?
She's *pregnant*?
SQUEEZE

I'm going to have... a sibling?
A PURE, CLEAN HEART...
...KNOWS HOW TO BREAK EVEN THE HARDEST SHELL FROM THE INSIDE OUT
A sibling...

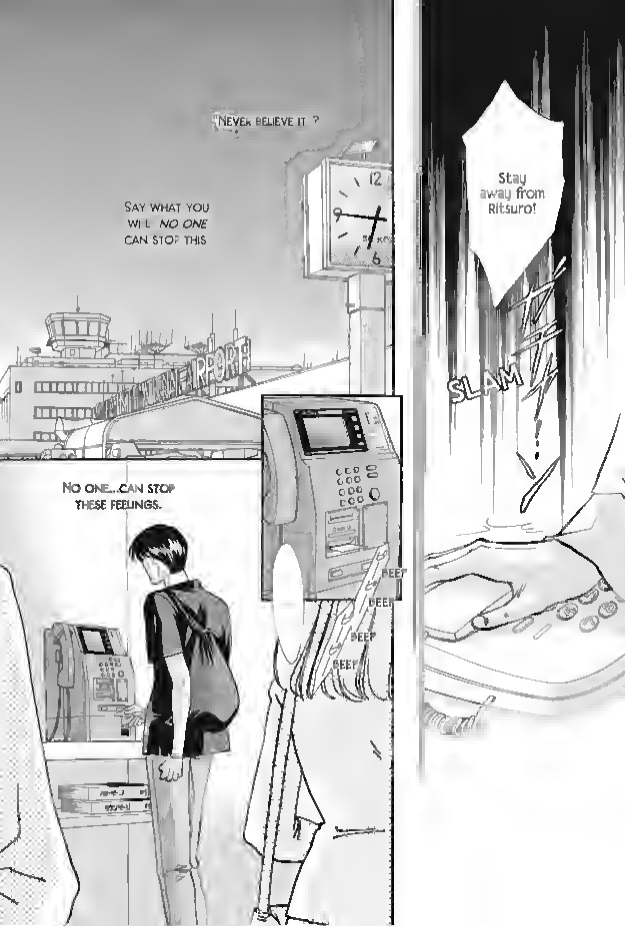
I CAN CHANGE.
NO, I WILL CHANGE. I'M GOING TO BREAK MY SHELL AND I'M—
...GOING TO BECOME STRONG.
RATTLE
RATTLE
SLAM
RATTLE

You're going to keep it, right?
My little brother or sister...
How did you know? Did the nurse tell you?
It makes me happy
Yes, but I'm almost forty... I'm scared...
I'll be here
Dad and I, we'll both be here.

Ken, honey ..
Thank you ..!
Ken..?
Let s start over, Mom We can turn back the clock on our relationship
Let's build a legacy like any other family

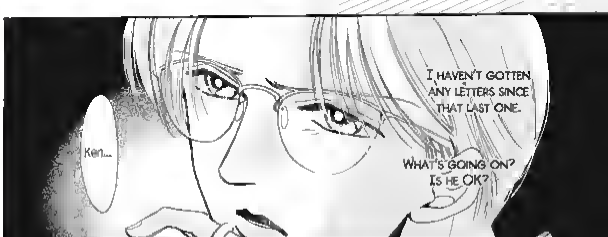

RIIIING
RIIIING
RIIIING
OK? Let's do that.

RIIIIING
RIIIIING
RIIIIING
Yoshinari residence
Hello. this is Ken Amafuji. Is Ritsuro there?
Hello?
What are you trying to do telling my son that stuff? Telling him it's *love*?! I- I'll never believe it!
Huh?
You don't understand how a father *feels*!
Do you get a *kick* out of turning families upside down?!


NEVER BELIEVE IT ?
SAY WHAT YOU WILL NO ONE CAN STOP THIS
NO ONE...CAN STOP THESE FEELINGS.
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
Stay away from Ritsuro!
SLAM!!

YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE FOR ME.

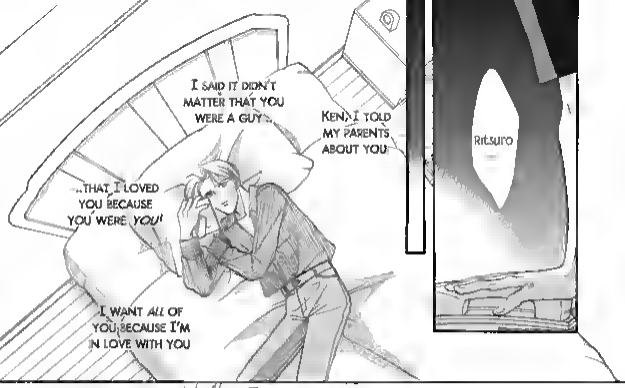
YOSHINARI
?
DAD?
Ritsuro...



Now I'm going to talk about Ken Amafuji. In a way, I think that I wrote ***"I Shall Never Return"*** to follow the growth of this one young man named Ken. Kazuyoshi went through some changes as well but Ken is the one who really grew up. To tell the truth, I actually had the most fun drawing Ken as the bad boy he was when the series started- but as Ken found his dreams and grew more and more positive, I watched him like a mother watches her child. I even began to wonder why I hadn't made Ken the main character! So I decided to write the novel version of the events from Ken's perspective, and it turned out to be really hard. But I did feel better because I'd wanted to try thinking about what was going on in Ken's head the whole time. On the technical side of things, what I remember most is how much of a pain it was to do the tones for Ken's hair! When Ken had a lot of scenes, it would take me over a day! But I really do like dark-haired characters, so it wasn't all bad. Ken's birthday is February 21, and he's a Pisces. Type B.

新 大 阪
しんおおさか
Shin Osaka
Do I need a reservation?
Great. I'll take a single.

FLOP
CLICK
What are you trying to do, telling my son that stuff? Telling him it's love?!
I- I'll never believe it!
Stay away from Ritsuro!
Do you get a kick out of turning families upside down?!


I SAID IT DIDN'T MATTER THAT YOU WERE A GUY...
KEN, I TOLD MY PARENTS ABOUT YOU!
Ritsuro
...THAT I LOVED YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE *YOU*!
I WANT *ALL* OF YOU, BECAUSE I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU

BUT WHAT HAPPENED?
Make him leave?
WHY HAVEN'T I HEARD FROM YOU?
HUH?

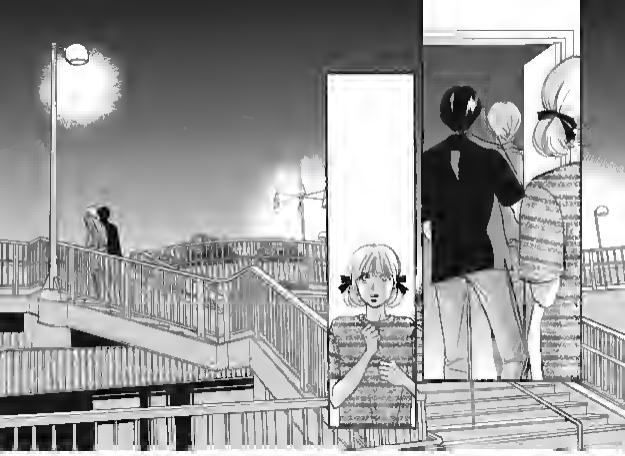
I need to see Ritsuro!
Please! Let me see him!
Nami, shut the door!
Ken?
Ken!
I won't allow it!

Why, Ritsuro?!
Why did this happen?
Let go! Let go of me!
You used to be such a good boy You never talked back ..
But then this *delinquent*
Ken's not a delinquent!
You don't know anything! You won't even *try* to understand!
If we've done something wrong tell me what it is!
It's unnatural!
Unnatural?! So I'd have your blessing if I was a woman?!

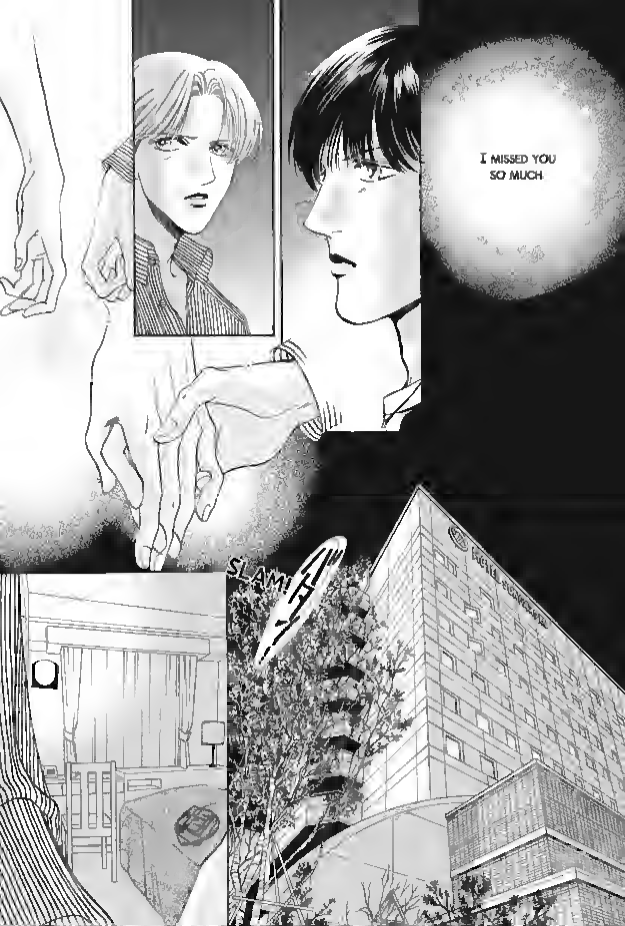
SO BEING NORMAL MAKES YOU HAPPY?
UNNATURAL..
Ken?
DOES BEING NORMAL GUARANTEE HAPPINESS?
I won't allow it.
I'll never allow it!
Ritsuro..
WHO CARES ABOUT NORMAL?
R t.su

I CAN GIVE ALL UP FOR KEN.
If you leave this house, you're never coming back!
GRAB
ALL I NEED IS YOU!
Welcome home..
...Ken.

I'm sorry...
Rit-suro
Ritsuro! Wait!
You don't need to apologize
Let's go.



KEN...


I MISSED YOU SO MUCH
SLAM

You're so tan...
Ken...
And you lost weight...
FLOP

EVERYTHING...
RITSU...
YOUR BREATH..
YOUR SKIN...
HA HA PANT
EVERYTHING
KEN-
HA HA PANT
RI... TSU...
HA HA PANT
HA HA PANT

I want your ..
Rit-suro
Mmm ..
SLISH

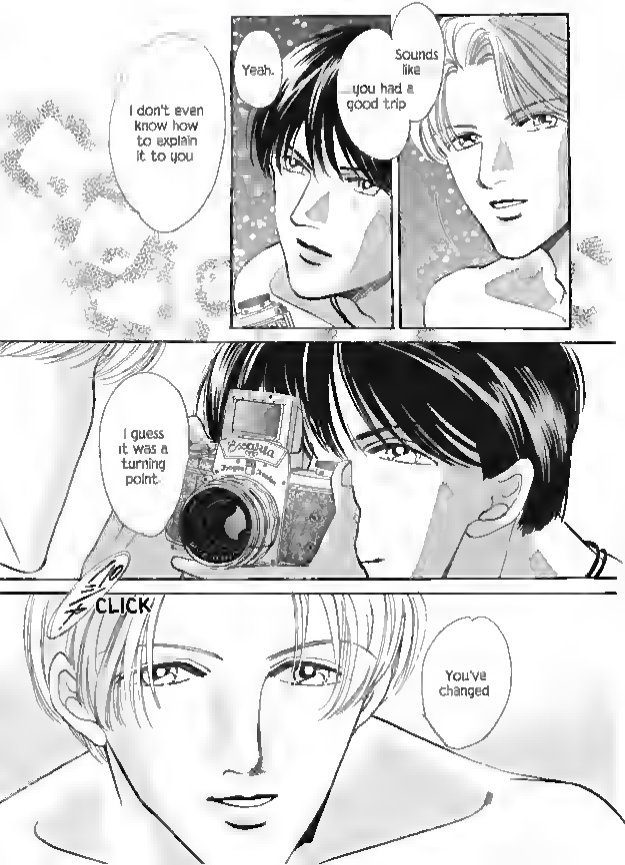
I HESITATED, GOT HURT—
Ritsu
SLISH
..STRUGGLED AND FOUGHT..
THE PURITY OF MY FIRST FEELINGS WERE SHOT THROUGH WITH LUST, AND I LOST SIGHT OF THEM..
Mmm... Nnn...
SLIDE
..AND GREW STRONGER
SLIDE
I WON'T HESITATE AGAIN.
Ohhh!

YOU'RE THE
ONLY ONE
FOR ME.

PANT
You numbass.
PANT
PANT
Do you think they can hear us next door?
I can't stop now even if you wanted me to

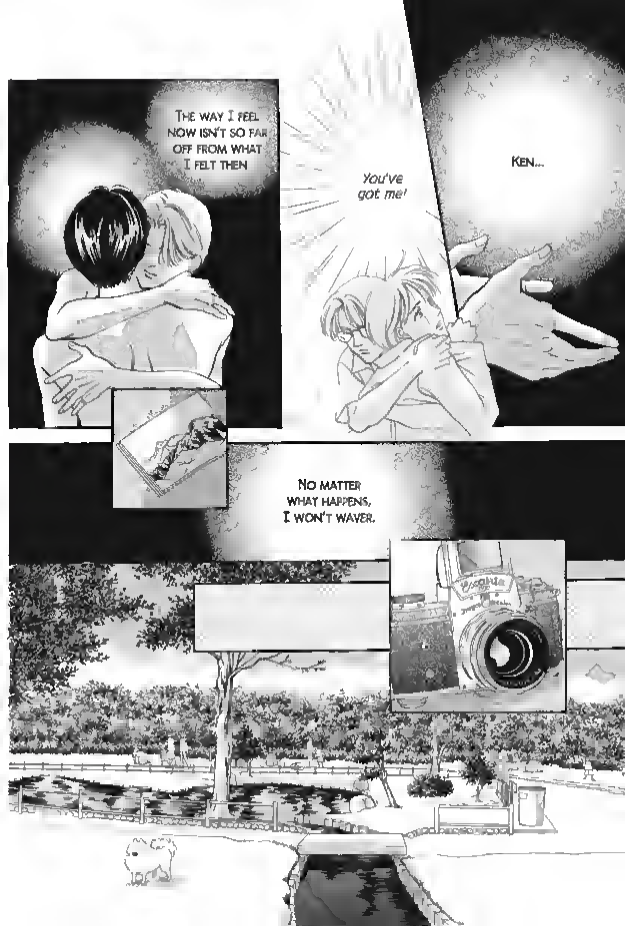
Ken...
I won't pull out.
ROLL
がばっ
You're not getting any sleep tonight.
SLISH
I LOVE YOU.
SLISH
住友VISA

Huh?
Dad took that one.
This one, too.
And this one.
"DAD"?
All the ones you picked out.
I can't beat Dad ..
KEN?


I don't even know how to explain it to you
Yeah.
Sounds like you had a good trip
I guess it was a turning point
CLICK
You've changed

You mean .. I've grown?
I've gotta get busy then
Yeah. I'm gonna be a *great* man
I have faith in you.
This—
..is one *you* took right?

I wanted to show you everything I was seeing.
Ritsuro ...
Seeing all the wonders of nature in that incredible place...
I felt you the whole time.
Ken...
I was so glad...
...to have met you.
So glad to have you.
I was so happy to have someone I wanted to share my amazement with. So much.


THE WAY I FEEL NOW ISN'T SO FAR OFF FROM WHAT I FELT THEN
You've got me!
KEN...
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I WON'T WAVER.

CLICK
Ken! I hope Coke's OK
CLICK
CLICK
OH...
TH-THUMP

CLICK
CLICK
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
SMILE
POP
Coke?
Thanks.

What?
You're so professional
And so gentle.
That boy was looking at you and smiling
Pictures of kids. Is it your dad's influence?
Kinda, but...
Huh?
Ken?
I'm going to have a little brother or sister.

Ken
My mom's pregnant.
She's due next spring
Huh?
BUZZ
What?
Ritsuro

CLICK
Our portrait together!
CLICK
Portrait?

Haha! Look how stiff your face is!
You may be a good photographer but you've got a long way to go as a model!

A memory?
It's just a memory so it doesn't matter
I like it.
GRAS
OF COURSE.
Oh, a memory...
When are you leaving?
THAT SUITCASE IS TOO SMALL. AND THIS HOTEL ROOM...
I KNEW
I'd rather have you love me from far away than not return my feelings from close by.
I'm lucky.
Ritsuno
My dad... is going blind

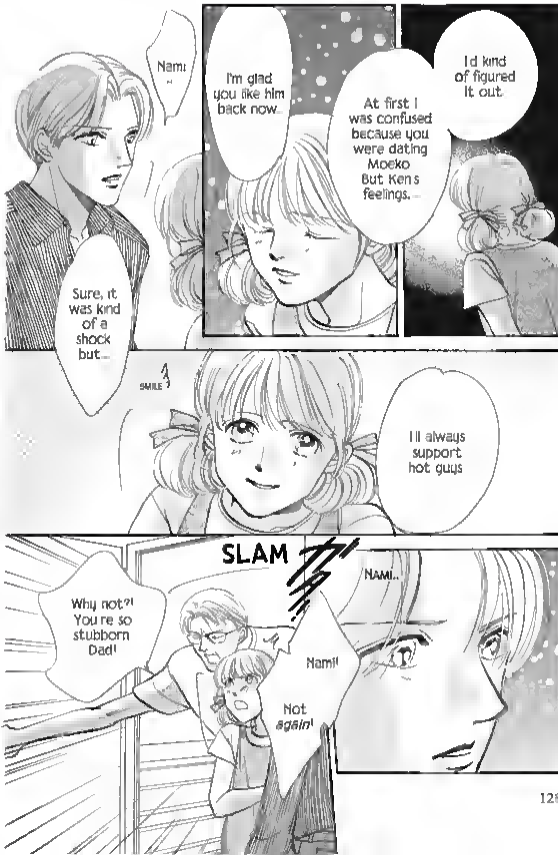
What?
He's in a hospital in Singapore and they're running all kinds of tests.
He may have surgery next month.
WHAT?!
At a time like this--
..you
HE'S A PHOTOGRAPHER. IF HE LOSES HIS EYESIGHT ..
HIS MOTHER'S GIVING BIRTH J'S SURGERY...
AND YET HE STIL
It's OK
I just got this family
Destiny's not that cruel to take it away

THIS "NORMAL" THAT YOU FOUGHT SO HARD TO ACHIEVE..
...SEEMS OVERRATED TO ME NOW.
YOU'VE REALLY CHANGED.
All I have to do is hope.
I'm really happy right now
I've got you *and* my family.
Don't look at me like that Ritsuro.
AND YET...
Ritsuro?
Let's take more pictures tomorrow.
Ritsuro?
G-Got it
Huh?

Where should we go? Umeda? Kyoto?
It's Sunday so everywhere's gonna be crowded.
JR
高槻
たかつき Takatsuki
Ken?!

Ken.
Hello?
DING DONG
DING DONG
It's Ken. Ritsuro's with me.
KEN?!
K-CHAK
Ken
Is your father here?
HE COULD TELL
Dad said he doesn't want to see you—
...THAT IT WAS STILL BOTHERING ME...

I can't stand that he has the wrong idea about us.
We don't have anything to hide.
Huh?
I can't stand it
Ken, let's just go. I'll deal with my family later
KEN...
And I...
Mom... Mom's worried about you. I think she'd *want* to see you.
Nami
Come in.


Nami ...
I'm glad you like him back now.
At first I was confused because you were dating Moeko But Ken's feelings...
I'd kind of figured it out.
Sure, it was kind of a shock but...
SMILE
I'll always support hot guys
SLAM
Why not?! You're so stubborn Dad!
Nami!!
Not again!
NAMI...

Ritsuro's the same as he's always been...kind and honest. He's done *nothing* to make you ashamed!
What?
Please don't let this change how you see Ritsuro!
I *told* you to stay away!
Friendship is one thing, but two men in *love*?
I don't understand it.
Well, why did you decide to marry Mom?
If it was because you wanted to protect her and make her happy...
...then that's the same way I feel about Ken.
Ritsuro ...

We're equals, and we give and take exactly the same amount
And at the same time I want Ken to support me and protect *me*
Ken supports me so much, he's almost too good for me.
That's what love is
Please understand
All the hurdles we've gotten over
I can say it because of everything we've been through.
Of all the nonsense..
I say it because I'm *sure* of it

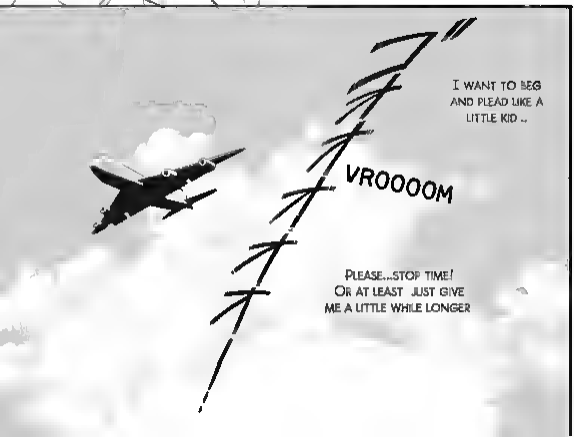
We're not going to go back to the past.
We're going to stick together no matter what.
I'm not going to go back to being the embarrassment I was
Because I have Ritsuro
KEN
Me too
I'm not going to be a son that you're ashamed of

Huh?
I need some time.
I'm going to need some time to understand all the things you've said
You can't expect me to understand it all right away
Dad?
You won't betray my expectations?
If that's what you're saying then you'd better back it up.
Show me with your actions.
And *then* I'll tell you whether I believe you or not.

THE CONFIDENCE TO SAY THAT...
...AND THE STRENGTH TO BELIEVE IT...
I just got this family. Destiny's not that cruel to take it away.

...I MET YOU.
I'M SO GLAD...

TIME SPENT WITH YOU GOES SO QUICKLY


I WANT TO BEG AND PLEAD LIKE A LITTLE KID ..
VROOOOM
PLEASE...STOP TIME! OR AT LEAST JUST GIVE ME A LITTLE WHILE LONGER

I've saved Miss Moeko Kobashi, the main woman of our cast, for last. I made my debut drawing shojo manga but I was always really bad at drawing girls.. *and* figuring out their personalities! I used to really worry about it. When I was trying to write a love story with a female protagonist I couldn't write the psychology of a girl in love in a way that I liked (in other words, in a way that I relinted to) even though I was a girl myself! But when it came to drawing poor Moeko, the girl who loses her boyfriend to his best friend, somehow I really felt a connection with her. Drawing Moeko made me want to try and draw more female characters even if I'm not very good at them. I still want to draw mostly male characters, but thanks to Moeko, I'm beginning to think that "normal love" isn't that bad, either..

I'm happy, though.
That you asked me to come see you off.
I've got something I really want to give you.
Huh?
What is it?
Ken- did you take these?
You remembered that I said I wanted to see some?
Of course
Wow these are great!
They're so pretty! Are these the Himalayas?!

They're so full of life!
So... cute!
Looks like your dream of becoming a photographer will come true!
That's going a little too far
What we talked about the other day
You're going to translate the books I write
And also Ken's photo-books!
Right Ritsuro?
Hmm?
Moeko's writing a book and you're translating it?
Eh, eh...
We were just talking...
It's not just talk!
Moeko

The thing is,
...I know that Ken's able to take these amazing photos because of you, Ritsuro.
So I don't want to see it and as just a dream!
Moeko
I'd rather have you love me from far away, than not return my feelings from close by
Of course!
Let's see each other again. We will, right?
Yeah.
I'll do my best.

You dummy.
Thanks for calling
The Cinderella Express, huh? But didn't you want to be alone with him?
Or would you have gotten too emotional by yourself?
...
Ritsuro ...
Just now
Just a little right now..
See ya!
HE GOT ON THE PLANE LIKE IT WAS NOTHING LIKE WE'D SEE EACH OTHER NEXT WEEK

Oh no, are you gonna cry? Here?
Who's crying Dummy?
There there
Thanks, Moeko
You're welcome.
I'M SO LUCKY.
THAT'S ALL I CAN THINK RIGHT NOW.

SENIOR CLASS 7
THREE MONTHS LATER.
Ritsuro?
Dad just got out of surgery
It was a success! We just have to wait for him to recover!

Really?!
That's great, Ken!
Me?
I'm doing things at my own pace like always. But I'll probably start getting nervous soon.
ENGLISH
ROOM
Don't space out and catch a cold! You don't want to get sick!
AND THE SEASONS TURN FROM FALL TO WINTER...
What?
You sound like my mother...

SPLAT
IWASAKI
Mayu!
Hee hee!
TIME PASSES SLOWLY WHEN I CAN'T SEE HIM, BUT..
...THIS IS THE SEASON WHEN I KEEP THINKING ABOUT ALL THE THINGS I STILL HAVE LEFT TO DO
Why you... This shirt was new—
Here!!
For you Big Brudder!
Kazuyoshi, you're going to miss your train!
Stop that, Mayu!
Train?
HEY!
Eeek!
Eeek!

Honey, are you ready for your trip? Should I call a cab?
Jeez I don't know where he gets it from
I'm gonna go change!
For crying out loud aren't you excited at all?
Don't apply to a school in Tokyo if you're not going to take it seriously
I'm all set No need for a cab Kamishiro's going to drive me.
FLOP
DING DONG
DING DONG

Huh?
CLI?
GRA
Your first choice?
What time is it?
To-mor-row isn't it?
My brain's the 7.23 Hikari
I've got time.
What business is it of yours?
Why don't you buy a new one?
Got rid of my old one.
You're really going to take an entrance exam without a watch?

I'll figure something out.
What about you? Aren't you going on a trip with my father?
It's a timed test, after all.
Huh?
CLICK
Thanks.
It suits you

WINTER ISN'T OVER YET
Kamishi-rin...
Yeah .. Shuichi
That guy... What's his name again?
BUT WE CAN HEAR FOOTSTEPS ..
.. DRAWING NEARER- STEP BY STEP

Kobashi what're you up to?
Oh just finishing up.
AT SHOTOKU ACADEMY..
GRADUATION CEREMONY
—IN OUR EARS, IN OUR HEARTS.
EACH ONE OF US.—
Oh Mr. Yumioka, your button ..
Kubota's looking for you
Getting all sentimental now?

Sir...
You like it?
It's nice
Oh, no... this is really old...
My hair's grown hasn't it?
Uh... yeah...
You're trying to... update your look?
I thought maybe I'd fall in *love*.

Just kidding
I should get going. Michiru's waiting.
Kohashi
Next time I see you I'm asking you out!
Huh?!

I'm looking forward to it!
This really isn't like me...

WE CAN HEAR THE FOOTSTEPS OF SPRING...
Now you owe me cake!
Sorry!

Immigration & Health · Terminal 2
ANA
Ritsuro!
What?!
At Changi Airport?! You.

J. TSUZUKI
Oh no— you're welcome here!
Sorry to impose
I got my passport thinking I'd visit sometime, but I just decided to drop by the day before yesterday
I'm impressed you came
I'm guessing you have good news?
Yeah
I was accepted to my first choice school.

OF COURSE, THAT'S NOT THE ONLY REASON...
Thanks
Con-grats!
FLOP
Jeez
Hey Ritsuro you OK?
You dumbass You didn't even drink that much
Ken...

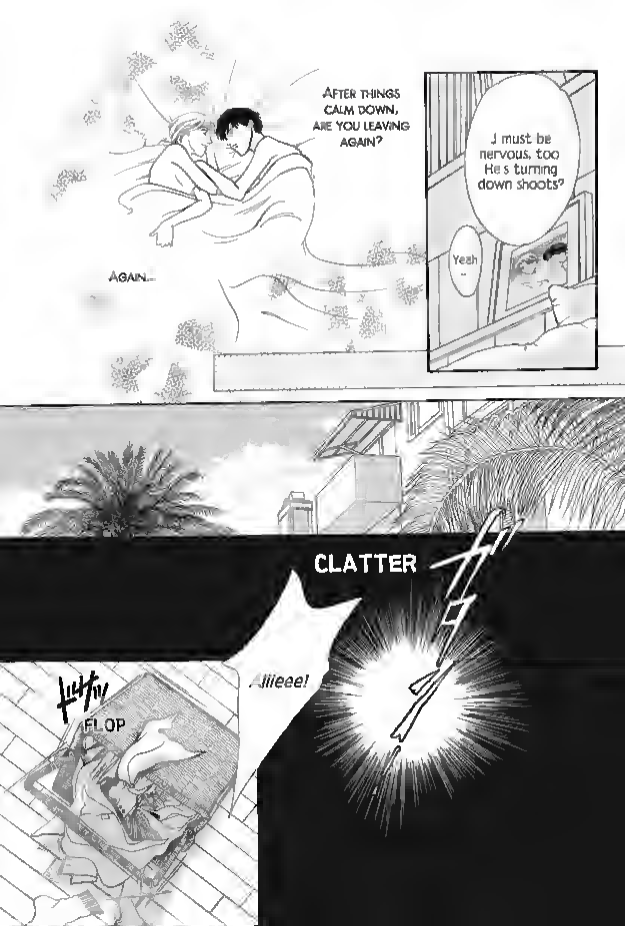
Ritsu...
I was so lonely...
So, so lonely. I...
Idiot.
Ken... Don't let go.
Let's do this forever OK?
You're drunk.

Ohh
Quiet.
You'll wake up Mom and Dad
I JUST WANT TO
K...
FLOP
...FEEL THIS MOMENT
CREAK

TH-THUMP
Huh?
Why are you blushing?
Hung-over huh?
GIGGLE
Y-Yes, that's it!
Y-Yeah
Good morning Ritsuro
Did you sleep well?
AND HIS MOTHER'S DOING WELL.
KEN SEEMS REALLY HAPPY.
J SEEMS TO BE BETTER.

Wow so next month Ken will be a big brother—
I think he's more nervous than I am
Of course I am!
It's probably the publisher.
I'll get it.
CLATTER
RRRRR
RRRRR
RRRRR

It's just a meeting.
Shoko ..
Junta, if it's a job offer you should take it I'll be fine
Sorry, I have to go out tomorrow
I'll just pop in and come right back.
You'll be OK you've got me
I thought you two were going to Sentosa Island tomorrow Don't worry about me
GLANCE
But, still
Uh
I don't mind
KEN...


AFTER THINGS CALM DOWN, ARE YOU LEAVING AGAIN?
AGAIN...
J must be nervous, too He s turning down shoots?
Yeah
CLATTER
Jiieee!
FLOP

Mom?!
Ken.. stay calm...
Where's J?
He went out.
Mom! hang on!
Mom!

operation center
SLAM
I'll go get J.
What's the address?
Ritsu
Stay with your mother
Pull yourself together. You're going to be a big brother
RRsure...

It's OK.
WHAT'S WAITING FOR US ISN'T SORROW, KEN.
Please come in...
..THAT WE HAD NOTHING BUT HOPE.
Dad's on his way. Just hang on
I'm sorry—
I slipped on the stairs..
Mom...
SQUEEZE
You're gonna be OK!
Hmm...
Ken...
YOU TOLD ME...
CLICK
Mom...

Where's Shoko?!
God...

PLEASE DON'T TAKE AWAY ANYTHING ELSE FROM KEN.
TICK TOCK
TICK TOCK
PLEASE, NOTHING ELSE.
I DON'T WANT HIM TO LOSE ANYTHING ELSE...

KEN...
おぎゃあああ
ぁぁぁぁぁぁぁぁ

KEN...
I have a little brother And Mom's fine...
Well? Isn't it a good name?
It'll be easy for people *here* to say, and...

We want him to be kind and gentle.
GIVEN
NAME
優
yu
Don't you like it?
Yu?
Ken?
Oh
Let me hold him..
THAT'S RIGHT. YU YU WAS..

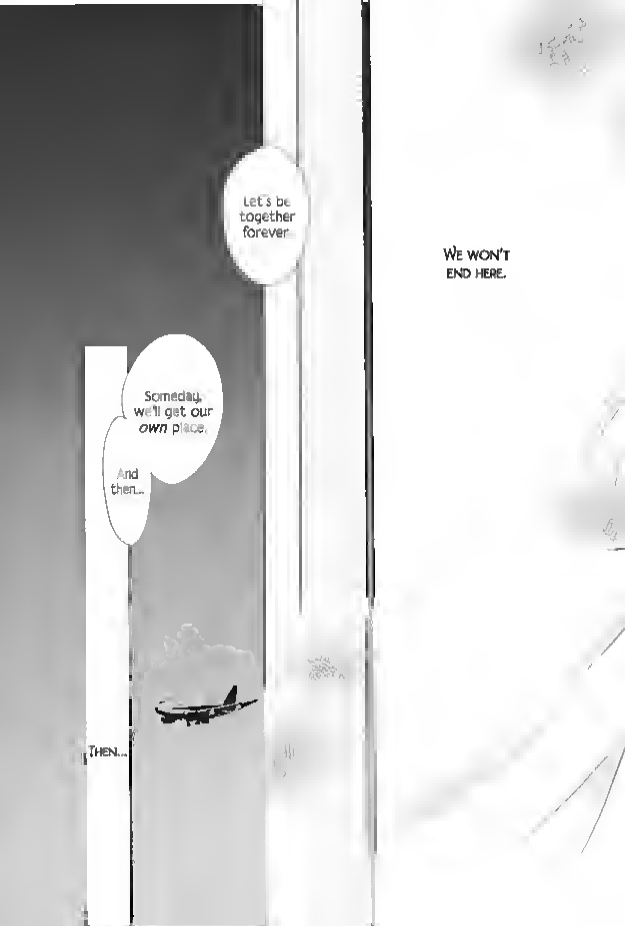
Yu
Yu, huh?
Yu...
I'm going to take *good* care of my little brother
Let's be friends, OK?
Yu...
KEN...
KEN...

Oh yeah I forgot to tell you Kazuyoshi's going to Tokyo
And Mieko's going to major in literature at Yonda
FLOP
Now I can go home and *really* start my new life
I had so much fun.
I'll have so many great memories.
My life is in Osaka
So you're really *leaving*?

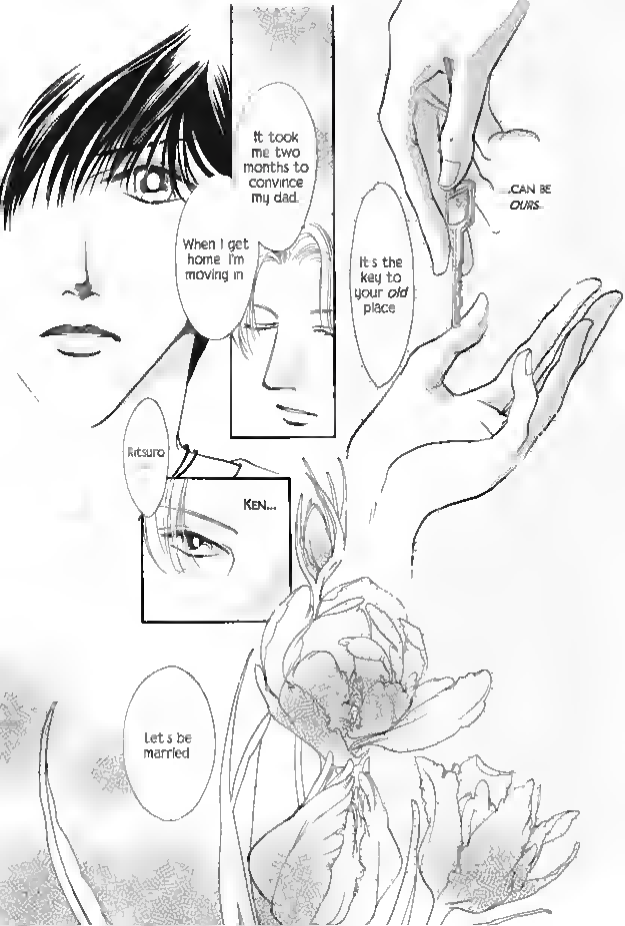
I REALLY WANTED A PROMISE
I THOUGHT OF ASKING HIM TO COME WITH ME.
Stay a little longer. I'll do something about your ticket.
Just one more night. OK?
Everyone's at the hospital, the house'll be empty.
Don't be silly, Ken.
We can't be so immature anymore.
Ken...
Ken?
I thought I'd gotten everything I wanted
But now I'm about to lose the most important thing of all. *You!*

I know
I know it's not rational
I want you to be happy. If *you're* happy, *I'm* happy—
And coming here was the right choice for you.
You're not going to lose me! The only thing that could be better is if we could see each other every day, right?
But these feelings...
I can't put them into words...

THEY'RE NOT LOGICAL...
THESE FEELINGS THAT DRAW US TOGETHER..
You must..
..know how I feel.


Let's be together forever.
Someday, we'll get our *own* place.
And then...
THEN...
WE WON'T END HERE.

I'm serious.
WE CAN BE EVEN HAPPIER.
Ritsuro?
Ken.
Put out your hand
Huh?
BECAUSE NOW THOSE QUIET DAYS THAT YOU WANTED


It took me two months to convince my dad.
When I get home I'm moving in
It's the key to your old place
..CAN BE OURS..
Ritsuro
KEN...
Let's be married

Let's start our new lives together
Let's do it.
WE CAN BE HAPPY...

...HOPE.

I Shall Never Return • END

YOUNG,
ALIVE,
& IN LOVE

WHEN I WAS 15 YEARS AND FOUR MONTHS OLD, I FELL IN LOVE.
FRESHMEN CLASS 11
カルフ
SLIDE
OSAKA TAKA
ANNUAL
ENTRANCE

NEW CLASSMATES...
STRIDE
Late on the first day..
A NEW CLASSROOM.
THE ENTRANCE CEREMONY (DITCHED)
THE BLUE SKY, CHERRY BLOSSOMS IN FULL BLOOM..

FLOP
HE'D BEEN ASSIGNED THE FIRST SEAT IN THE FIRST ROW.
HIS NAME WAS KEN AMAFUJI.
THUNK
Word
EVEN SO
The window seat is great, but I can't sleep in class now.

SO I CAN'T EVEN SLEEP
loft
BHP

Hey, Amafuji!
What a coinci-dence!
Uh..

I'm Kazuyoshi Iwasaki I sit behind you seat number two
Oh yeah
You by yourself?
Ken...?
CLIP ZOON

OK wait here.
Want a drink?
Get on y
Come
Let Me Rock on Your Knee
Coming down with my fire
t time for you

Hey Kazuyoshi, who's that? Never seen *him* before
You and he a *thing*?
If you wanna get me to smile
Don't be a prick. He's a guy from school. Thought I'd bring him along
School? So he's in high school, too?
Not that I *care* but I don't want any trouble
Got it.
RUB
Well if you get it, how about you and me? I'll cut you a break.
I got all the holes I need!
Holes? Shit
Forget about chicks, K?

EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THESE DIRTY GUYS, HE DOESN'T FREAK OUT
Gimme a break.
You think you can *buy* love?
HE COULDN'T BE, RIGHT?
CLINK
GULP
BEER
CERVEZA

Oh yeah?
I was watching you.
What?
Your mouth is trouble.
My mouth?
Makes me start thinking about what it might be.
I can't look away. It's like you're always about to say something.

I can't tell what you're thinking
And...
Nothing much
I bet.
I get that a lot.
You're weird

There's nothing here for
I get that a lot.
THE REASON I COME TO THIS CLUB FULL OF GUYS...
...ISN'T TO PICK THEM UP.
So go ba
'Cuz y
I DON'T SWING THAT WAY.
TAP
There's nothing here for
Long time no see, Mr. Kozuki.
Ken?
Who's that?
This is Ken.

I JUST NEED...
He takes me
Secret in his
..SOMETHING TO MAKE ME FEEL GOOD
CLATTER
Let's go.
Hey, Katsuyoshi.

That's kinda...
I'm not askin you to do it for free. You'll be well compensated.
He's one of my best clients.
I know that but... I'm not a whore
Hey, Ken!
Can I ask you something?

How do you feel about fucking for money?
He's an important client...
How 'bout it? Just for tonight. And if you do a good job...
How much?
WHA-?!
So, the one I want you for is...
WHISPER
Ken don't!

Drugs?
You're here with Kazuyoshi, right? Ain't *this* what you came for?
I'll give you thirty thousand yen, plus ten grams.
Grams?
Well, Ken? You wanna have some fun and make a little money?
Sex or drugs.
Everyone is here for one or the other. Or both.
It's rare for someone to come *only* for drugs, like Kazuyoshi.
Make it fifty thousand.

Heh.
So you're just here for the sex. Fine with me
W-Wait, Ken!
You're serious?!
I'll have a hotel suite booked for you tomorrow night at 10
You'll get half up front, half later.
SLAM!
Are you crazy?!
TOILET
CHAK
Is... IS HE SERIOUS?!

It's no big deal. It's just sex.
What?! Even with a guy?!
Just sex? How can you say that?!
I'd rather die than get my ass reamed by some guy!
You gotta tell him now
If you're gonna give the money back, you gotta do it soon
SWISH
You're the one who brought me here.
Did you just want to make a junkie out of me?
!
This shit...
G-Give it back!

GRAB
Ken...
You wanna? Right here?
W-Wanna what?
Do you want me to kiss you? You keep talking about my *mouth*

Sto-
Y-You dum-bass

"I JUST
WANNA
FEEL GOOD"

SELLING HIMSELF TO STRANGE MEN LIKE THAT...
HE SAYS THAT'S WHY HE SLEEPS WITH MEN.
THAT'S WHAT KEN TOLD ME.
HOTEL DINO
I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* HE'S THINKING...

What is it? You seem down.
Take your clothes off already. I'm waiting—
Hey this was *your* idea.
Do whatever you like. You're a pro, right?
Here.
Is there someone you're trying to forget?

What makes you say that?
You think I'm *lonely* trying to buy love?
I'm just taking care of my needs.
Well if it's company...
you're looking for...
I'M NOT LONELY.
Stop it.
I JUST WANT TO BE SURE.
Why? Didn't it feel good?

Well yeah, but what you're doing is *wrong*
What, feeling good with another guy?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.
I MEANT THINKING THAT YOU CAN PUT A *PRICE* ON LOVE.

Let's get outta here.
Huh?
Ken.
DON'T YOU THINK THAT'S TWISTED?
THAT'S WHAT I MEANT.

BEE
Stop whoring around
If you need money, there are other ways to get it. You can find a job or something.
It's not the money.
Don't say that!

You're sick!
!
I'm just looking to feel good, same as you. I told you that.
So what? Should I do drugs instead?!
You're a bitch in heat! Is that it?!
You do it with people you don't even care about!
HE DOESN'T CARE IF IT'S WITH A MAN OR A WOMAN
A bitch?

It..
It only feels good to *me* when I'm with someone I care about!
I...
KEN...
Kazu-yoshi?
BEEP
You're meeting someone tonight, right?
WHY'RE YOU LIKE THIS?

IF IT'S COMPANY YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...
End it!
Just end it!
Right?!
I...
SEEEP
Kazu-yoshi?

Young, Alive & In Love • End

LOVERS
AND
SOULS
Taste the Forbidden...
From Kano Miyamoto
Deux

Deux

Don't do anyone
I wouldn't do.

YAKUZA IN LOVE 3

SHIUKO KANO

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I was a "Boy" at the club-
and he was a client.

Sakura first meets Ryoichi at a male brothel and buys him for the night. As their supposed one-night stand ends up becoming a somewhat stable monetary based relationship, their lives start to change. Can these two awkward people garner the courage to admit that their true feelings run deeper than merely sex and money?

Say Please

Kano Miyamoto

Deux

Publishing Co. Ltd.

EXPLICIT CONTENT

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Deux
Oh my god !
1
Sexy & Mysterious...
Yuto is a typical high school student whose family just happens to come from a long line of sorcerers. He accidentally awakens a god who was sealed in a sword hundreds of years ago. Now, if only this mysterious god could remember who he is! Yuto names this extremely good-looking spirit, Jade. Stuck with an amnesiac god who's strangely attached to him, Yuto begins a clamorous life of high school, adventure and attraction.

Mister Mistress

1

I mean, I'm your typical teenage boy who's up for anything but getting stuck with a princess and a queen who lives off of his erotic distress.

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EXPLICIT CONTENT

Rize Shinba

Deux

Tomcats

Pint-sized human cats, shady "men in black," cat gods and more!

Mashiro Minamino

Deux

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Deux

A romantic lover awaits you... in the future.

Kento Kumagaya wishes for the simple things in life- to have a happy family with the ideal housewife, loving kids, and kind grandparents all living together, happily ever after. Fate, however, has other plans. Enter Akira Kazuki, a smart, beautiful and unrestrained gay man who shatters Kento's dream with a single night of wild and passionate homosexual sex. This is a romantic, sweet and funny story between two different people (in more ways than one) who unexpectedly find the same future together.

Future Lovers

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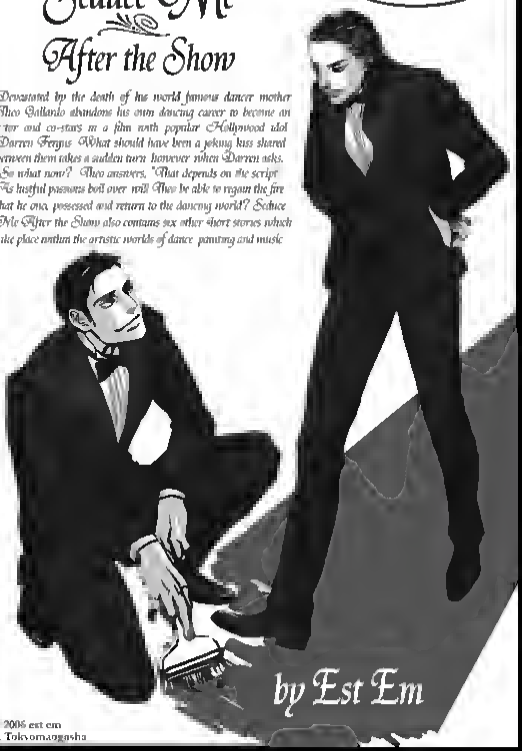
A Tempestuous Dance of Anguish and Passion!

Deux

Seduce Me After the Show

Devastated by the death of his world famous dancer mother Theo Gallardo abandons his own dancing career to become an actor and co-stars in a film with popular Hollywood idol Darren Fergus. What should have been a joking kiss shared between them takes a sudden turn however when Darren asks, 'So what now?' Theo answers, 'That depends on the script.' As hateful memories boil over will Theo be able to regain the fire that he once possessed and return to the dancing world? Seduce Me After the Show also contains six other short stories which take place within the artistic worlds of dance, painting and music.



by Est Em

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Where Fantasy Becomes Obsession...

This is the back of the book. Read from right to left.

◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ Turn over & enjoy! ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀ ◀

I Shall Never Return

5

I Shall Never Return • Volume 5

Story and Art by Kazuma Uchida

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Printed in Japan

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